EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Delhi to Kathmandu (DKD 2016)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
17
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: DKD

Trip Highlights - Delhi to Kathmandu

- Delhi - Explore Old and New Delhi
- Ranthambore National Park - Take a game drive in search of the elusive Bengal tiger
- Agra - Witness the sunrise over the exquisite Taj Mahal
- Ganges Sailing - Drift down the Ganges on a traditional sailing boat
- Varanasi - Join the evening aarti ceremony in India's holiest city
- Chitwan - Jungle walk and jeep safari in search of the one-horned rhino
- Kathmandu - Explore the Royal palace, Durbar Square and main bazaar

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	12 nights Standard Hotel 1 night Simple Overnight Train 1 night Simple Camping 2 nights Standard Lodge
Included Meals:	16 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 4 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Delhi
End Point:	Trip ends: Kathmandu
Transport:	Rickshaw, Bus, Train, Boat
Countries:	India, Nepal

Delhi To Kathmandu

This journey takes us from Delhi to some of India's great cultural sights and into Nepal. We visit the 'Pink City' of Jaipur, search for the elusive tiger in Ranthambore National Park and marvel at the impressive Taj Majal. Camping on riverside beaches, we sail along the Ganges to the spiritual city of Varanasi. In Nepal we discover Buddha's birthplace, search for one-horned rhinos, see the snow-capped Himalaya and explore the capital Kathmandu.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Delhi

This afternoon we will take a city sightseeing tour of New Delhi with a local guide (approximately 3 hours). We will view the Raj Path, India Gate, Parliament, and visit the peaceful gardens of Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Explore Old Delhi's spice market. Take a train to Jaipur

Compared to New Delhi, the Old City is much closer to the image conjured up by Rudyard Kipling. This morning, a local guide will show us around Old Delhi by metro and on foot, culminating with a jamboree of deafening barter at Chandni Chowk Bazaar. A short cycle rickshaw ride then takes us to the Jama Masjid mosque. Later in the afternoon we transfer to Old Delhi station for the train journey to Jaipur, arriving in the evening. Sometimes called the 'Pink City', Jaipur was first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Sawai Ram Singh to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert in 1853.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Visit Jaipur's Amber Fort and City Palace Museum

This morning we will visit the once mighty Rajput capital of Amber (traditionally known as Amber) and its magnificent fortress. Lying at the mouth of a rocky mountain gorge, overlooking Maotha Lake, the fort is a stunning creation of white marble and red sandstone that contains a dazzling mix of Hindu and Muslim ornamentation, including the breathtaking mirrored halls of the Sheesh Mahal. It was from these towering walls that the Kachchawahas ruled over their kingdom for some 7 centuries, until its importance was eclipsed by nearby Jaipur. We will also take in the unique Hawa Mahal, the famous Palace of the Winds, whose extraordinary façade of red and pink sandstone towers some 5 storeys above the city streets. Built at the end of the 18th century its 935 windows were designed to allow the women of the harem to gaze out on the city scene below without themselves being seen, the openings also creating a refreshing breeze (hawa), which kept the palace cool even in the hot summer months. We will spend some time exploring the lavish and well-preserved City Palace. Here, we will find a fine collection of textiles, costumes and armoury. Later this afternoon, we will visit the extraordinary Jantar Mantar – a star-gazing observatory built by Jai Singh, the great Maharajah-astronomer.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Take a jeep safari in Ranthambore National Park

Leaving Jaipur we take the train to Sawai Modhopur, the gateway to Ranthambore National Park. One of the best of India's 'Project Tiger' conservation projects, Ranthambore was once the private reserve of the Maharajahs of Jaipur and encompasses nearly 400 square kilometres of lush jungle, turquoise lakes and ancient temples that provide a rich haven for crocodiles, leopards, tigers and some 300 species of birds. This is probably one of the best parks in the country for spotting tigers and during the dry season from September to May, when water is scarce, the animals stay close to the lakes and rivers, affording some ideal opportunities to search out these most elusive and magnificent of animals. We take a game drive in to the park this afternoon.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Visit Fatehpur Sikri; Drive to Agra

After an early morning game drive in the hope of spotting a tiger we head east,taking the train to Bharatpur and then driving onwards reaching the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri late morning. Founded in 1569 and abandoned scarcely 16 years later, it is a perfectly intact example of Akbar's imperial court. Among the many noteworthy buildings is the 5-storied Panch Mahal, probably a pleasure pavilion for the ladies of the harem. In the centre of the courtyard is the Pachisi Board where the emperor played a game like chess with dancing slave girls as pieces. Perhaps the finest structure of all is the lotus shaped carved central pillar of the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), its extraordinary capital supporting a vaulted roof. Later we drive on to Agra arriving in the afternoon.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Visit the Taj Mahal; Overnight train to Allahabad

We visit the Taj Mahal, the world's most perfect and poetic building, at sunrise. Over 300 years have elapsed since its construction, yet it stands today, largely unscarred by age, its beauty and symmetry seemingly beyond man, time and space. Created by Shah

Jahan as a funerary monument to his favourite wife Mumtaz, it took 22 years to build (1630-52). The Great Moghul lies beside his beloved under the white marble dome. We'll visit the Agra Fort this afternoon; built by Akbar the Great, the fort stands in an imposing position on a bend in the Yamuna River with wonderful views of the Taj Mahal further along its banks. The fort contains some stunning and very intricate designs. There may be time before sunset to revisit the Taj, or to the exquisite Itimad-ud-Daulah (baby Taj) after which we drive to Agra train station to catch our overnight train to Allahabad. Please note: There is currently a restoration project taking place at the Taj Mahal, which involves applying a mud pack to the outer walls of the monument. In order to carry out the work, temporary scaffolding is being erected around the minarets and portions of the main dome. The work is being carried out in phases and is expected to continue until January 2017.

Overnight: **Simple Overnight Train**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Arrive Allahabad; sail to beaches downstream

After arriving in Allahabad early this morning we will head to a local hotel to freshen up and have breakfast, before continuing our journey by road for approximately 3-4 hours to the sacred River Ganges for the start of our boat trip downstream. The next two days will give a unique glimpse at rural life in India and a welcome chance to relax and unwind. We will float peacefully through the fertile Gangetic plain to Varanasi, passing villages and ornate temples, fields of wheat and rice paddies, and stunning sunsets. The traditional wooden boats take up to four passengers plus two crew, who have all grown up living and working on or around the river, who expertly row and sail the boat downstream. Every need will be catered for over the next two days; drinks will be available to purchase on the boats, we'll make regular comfort breaks by the side of the river and there will be a 'support boat' which doubles as the kitchen following closely behind, with a chef on board preparing your lunch and dinner. For our overnight stop we camp on a beach on the banks of the river in 2-man tents. The actual location we use will vary according to local conditions, but where ever we stop you'll be able to relax over dinner and gaze up at the stars before retiring to bed.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Arrive Varanasi (Benares)

Today we continue our journey down river to the holy city of Varanasi where we disembark at Asi Ghat and transfer to our hotel. Varanasi (Benares) has been the centre of Hinduism since the dawn of history, its age is contemporary with Babylon and Thebes. Often known as 'Kashi' (City of Light) by Hindus it attracts over a million pilgrims each year - many of whom come to spend their last years here in the holy city. This evening you can return to the ghats to witness the evening aarti ceremony when the Ganga is venerated with a display of light and sound.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9 In Varanasi; excursion to Sarnath

This morning we take an early morning boat trip along the Ganges to see the Hindu devout bathing in its sacred waters, before we visit nearby Sarnath. Having gained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya Buddha came to Sarnath to preach his first sermon. The city was at its peak in the 5th century, when it was a respected centre of religious activity, learning and art. Muslim invaders destroyed much of the city and today remains of several monasteries and stupas can be seen. The afternoon is left free in Varanasi to enable you to explore the labyrinth of streets, bazaars and temples that line the banks of the river or perhaps this evening, it may be possible to attend an optional classical musical performance.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Train and drive to Lumbini (cross Nepalese border at Sonauli)

We have a long yet interesting journey today (approximately 8 hours), as we head north across the Gangetic Plains, through remote towns and villages to the Nepalese border at Sonauli. We first take a train from Varanasi to the town of Gorphpur. This is the furthest we can travel by train so we switch to a bus and drive the remaining distance to Sonauli. We walk through customs and immigration into Nepal and meet our Nepalese bus which will transfer us to Lumbini where we spend the night.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Site seeing in Lumbini then drive to Chitwan National Park

We start our day with rickshaw sightseeing tour of Lumbini accompanied by a local guide. We will have the opportunity to visit the birth place of the Buddha Peace lamp and the monastery of peace pagoda. From here we drive (approximately 5 hours) which takes us through the Terai, the narrow forested lowland strip that stretches the full width of the southern border of Nepal. We will stop in Butwal en route so we can pick up some lunch and then aim to arrive at Chitwan in the late afternoon. The oldest and best known of the national parks in Nepal, Chtiwan consists of swamp, tall elephant grass and dense forest, and is a natural habitat for tiger, the rare one-horned Indian rhino, leopard and sloth bear to name but a few. Once we arrive at the park we'll take a short afternoon village walk close to the park to orientate ourselves.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 12 Search for wild rhino in Chitwan National Park

Once a private hunting ground, Chitwan is now a National Park, with thick tree cover and tall elephant grass sheltering a wealth of animals, most famously the one-horned rhino. Today you will be kept busy with many activities available, including jeep safaris searching out the rhino, bird watching, jungle walks and canoe trips along the Rapti River. The river trip will be dependent on the water level, floating silently down the Rapti River gives us the opportunity to spot many varieties of water birds and other wildlife. On a nature walk in the company of trained native naturalists you can walk along trails in the less densely forested parts of the park. An early morning bird watching walk near the river will reveal many of the 450 bird species that can be found in the park, especially kingfisher. A trained naturalist will help you get the best enjoyment and interest from these excursions.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 Early morning birdwatching walk before driving to Pokhara

After a final early morning walk through the park we'll leave for Pokhara. The drive will take around 5 hours depending on the traffic and we will take a packed lunch to have along the way. We pass through the bustling town of Naryanghat Bazaar, then head north beside the River Trisuli to the 'wild west' town of Mugling at the confluence of the Marsyandi and Trisuli rivers, before reaching our final destination for today. Pokhara is a relaxed town situated on the banks of Lake Phewa Tal and set beneath the Annapurna Range. The afternoon is left free to wander through the town, to pick up some souvenirs at the many Tibetan handicraft stalls or just relax by the lakeside after the journey.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 14 Walk to the Peace Pagoda for views of the Himalaya

After breakfast this morning we stretch our legs by walking up through small villages to the Japanese Peace Pagoda. This beautful lookout point offers wonderful views across to the Annapurna Range and back down to the town of Pokhara. After enjoying the views we walk back following a different path and stop to visit the Tibetan Tashiling Monastery. The afternoon is again free to relax in Pokhara. It is possible to hire mountain bikes and cycle around the lake, or take short walks. There is also the option to visit the Mountain Museum, an interesting museum dedicated to the history of Himalayan Mountaineering.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 Drive to Kathmandu

This morning we drive to Kathmandu (approximately 6 hours). We retrace our route back to Mugling, then continue heading east. Once we reach Naubise the road starts to climb and reaches a pass on the Kathmandu valley rim via a series of breathtaking zig-zags before descending to the city. We may have the chance today to take an optional trip to the Manakamana temple near Kurintar, time permitting.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Take a walking tour in Kathmandu

This morning, we have arranged a walking tour of this fascinating historic city, visiting the bazaar and temples of old Kathmandu, accompanied by a local Nepali guide. Much of the day to day life of Kathmandu takes place in the local bazaar: a fascinating mixture of people selling spices; potters spinning their wheels; rickshaw wallahs honking their horns and the ever present sacred cow wandering amongst it all. We end up in Durbar Square at the heart of the city. In the afternoon we plan to visit the temple of Pashupatinath on the banks of the Bagmati River, the holiest Hindu shrine in Nepal, and also to visit Bodnath, the largest stupa in the country and a destination for Buddhist pilgrims from all over Nepal.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 17 Tour ends Kathmandu

The tour ends this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Accommodation in India is as varied as the country itself. On our tours we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties, camp sites and homestays. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. Service can be slow in places especially when travelling with a group. For the most part hotels do not have heating so in the winter months it can be chilly and if you feel the cold you may wish to ask for extra blankets. Hot water is not always available 24 hours a day in some of the smaller properties, and with a group staying you might find if you are showering last you may miss out on the hottest water.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 16 breakfasts, 5 lunches,4 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

India

Lunch £: 6.00

Dinner £: 8.00

Nepal

Lunch £: 7.00

Dinner £: 10.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

India

Bottle of Beer £: 1.40

Water £: 0.50

Nepal

Bottle of Beer £: 3.00

Water £: 0.30

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Jaipur - Bollywood film 150 INR; visit to Amber Fort 400 INR
Agra - 'Baby Taj' US$ 4. Extra visit to Taj by rickshaw US$ 18 (if time permits).
Varanasi - Arti ceremony US$ 10
Kurintar- Manakamana temple US$20
Pokhara - Mountain Biking US$50
Kathmandu - Half day tour of Bhaktapur US$ 35 (min 4 people). Half day tour of Patan US$ 30 (min 4 people).

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £30 for tipping. Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

India

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in most large cities in India but they are very limited elsewhere so please do not rely on this.

Credit Card Acceptance: Very rarely, only in the larger outlets.

Travellers Cheques: Opportunities to exchange are limited.

Local Currency: Indian Rupee

Recommended Currency for Exchange: GBP/US$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

Where to Exchange: The Indian rupee is a restricted currency and it is best not to obtain in the UK as rates are very poor. You can either change money at the airport on arrival or in major towns during the tour. Your Tour Leader will advise you on the best places in each town.

Nepal

ATM Availability: Although you may occasionally find cash machines these are very unreliable – do not rely on plastic!

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are not generally accepted except in larger establishments in Kathmandu.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are not accepted as a valid mode of payment in Nepal.

Local Currency: Nepali Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US$ or GBP.

Where to Exchange: In major cities and towns

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

India: India: Holders of passports endorsed 'British citizen' may be eligible for the e-Tourist Visa to enter India. The visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html. Please check all eligibility criteria that can be found on the website but important points are listed below -

You must be arriving into one of 16 selected entry points, however, you can exit from any of the authorised immigration check posts in India. Entry points are - Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Amritsar, Gaya, Lucknow, Trichy, Varanasi and Ahmedabad.
Passports must have at least 6 months validity from the date of arrival in India and at least two blank pages for stamping.
The visa application will take approximately 4 days to process.
It is only valid for 30 days and is only allowed for a maximum of two visits in a calendar year.
The visa costs $60.
Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India.

If you are not eligible for the e-Tourist Visa, please refer to VFS Global to apply for your Indian visa - http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/

how_to_apply.html.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Tiger Safari permit requirements: Ranthambore National Park is closely managed by the Indian Authorities and recently significant changes have been made to the process of booking game drives in the park. The number of vehicles permitted to enter the park at any one time has been severely reduced and all game drives must now be booked and paid for well in advance. In order to secure a booking we must provide your passport copy and full payment for the safari at the time of booking. Game drives are non-refundable. Once a game drive has been booked no changes are permitted. In order to proceed with bookings we require the following: A scanned copy of your passport - if you are currently renewing your passport then you will need to take both passports with you on all game drives. We cannot guarantee the operation of any game drives until the necessary permits have been purchased. We aim to purchase the permits as soon as they are put on sale, whilst this is usually at 90 days before the date of the game drive on going changes to the booking system means that we cannot guarantee this. We aim to book all of our game drives in shared jeeps, with a maximum of 6 passengers per jeep with a driver and naturalist guide. Park regulations are in place to keep the number of vehicles in the park at any time to a minimum and as a result of this on occasion we will be sharing jeeps with non-Explore passengers. We recommend you book as early as possible in order to have the best chance of securing a space on a game drive. We will purchase seats for all passengers as soon as permits become available, usually 3 months prior, after this point it is not always possible to secure additional spaces.

Nepal: An entry visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens. Visas can be arranged on arrival, but due to queues at immigration we recommend for the visa to be arranged in advance. A passport-sized photograph for immigration is required if you are arranging your visa on arrival.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

India

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria (eg. Paludrine, Chloroquine, Mefloquine etc.). The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth and from your local healthcare provider.

Nepal

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, polio and Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

India

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India but, in general, the climate is tropical. Summer temperatures on the plains are very hot, but cooled by the South-West Monsoon, which lasts from June- September. During these months it can be very wet and therefore very humid. At altitude, temperatures can become quite cool at night even in the summer and may drop below freezing between December and February so warm clothing is necessary. In the winter, northern and mid India can be very cool, with cold evenings, so warm clothing, including plenty of layers, are essential. The south of India remains warm and sunny during the winter months.

Nepal

Temperatures in the lower altitude regions are extremely pleasant. At Pokhara variations in temperature are very limited: from the coldest recorded of 8°C (46°F) to the highest of 31°C (88°F). The mountains are best admired, with greater air clarity, from October to March. Monsoon rains are strongest in June, July and August. The coldest months are December and January.

Clothing

Lightweight clothing is needed from March to November, December through to February is cooler especially early mornings and evenings with the occasional very cold spell for which you should be prepared. You should bring a fleece and a woolly hat and gloves for the early morning game drives and camping. Thermals may also be useful for camping. Local people may be offended by western styles of dress. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing, etc. should be avoided by both men and women.

Equipment

Bring a 2-3 season (temperature -5°C to 0°C) sleeping bag for the Ganges Sailing (a sleep sheet is sufficient in Sep/Oct and April), a torch and a personal water bottle. Tents (with mosquito screens), mattresses, 2 blankets per passenger (Nov- Mar), eating and drinking utensils are provided locally.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember - porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

Transport

In order to make reservations on Indian trains we require your full passport details. It is important that we receive these details as soon as possible so we are ready to make the arrangements as soon as train tickets are available to buy.

Travelling on an Indian train is a fantastic experience, with millions using the rail network every day it is the perfect opportunity to meet local families. Due to the system for booking train tickets in India, whilst we'll try to ensure groups are as close together as possible, it may not be possible to have customers sat together in the same carriages. In such cases our Tour Leaders will help everyone to find their seats and ensure you get the most out of your journey. If you do not wish to carry one with you, your tour leader can help you to purchase one locally before your train journey.

General Information

Country details

India

Population: 1,210,193,422

Size of Country: 3,287,263 sq km

Major Language: Hindi and English.

Religion: Catholicism, Hindu, Muslim and Sikhism

Time Difference to GMT: +5

Nepal

Population: 29,331,000

Size of Country: 147,181 sq km

Major Language: Nepali

Religion: Hinduism

Time Difference to GMT: +5:45

Electric Supply & Plugs

India

3 Pin Round

Nepal

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We

currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2016 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2016. 2017/18 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2017.

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